

October 1, 1999

H.R. 415: EXPAND AND REBUILD
AMERICA'S SCHOOLS ACT

HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 1, 1999

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to one of the most pressing difficulties facing our schools: overcrowded and run-down facilities.

Last month, 53.2 million young people went back to school. The facilities that greeted them were not up to par. One-third of all public schools are in serious need of repair or replacement, and nowhere is that problem more obvious than my home district in Orange County, California.

Our schools are simply run down and out of room, and California is feeling the crunch. Facilities are so crowded in our state that we would have to spend \$4 billion by 2002 in order to provide enough space. In fact, high school enrollment is projected to grow by a full one-third between 1998 and 2008.

Right now our children attend schools with leaking roofs, dangerous wiring and chipping paint, crammed into storage closets, libraries and gyms for lack of classroom space. By neglecting to provide an environment appropriate for learning and teaching, we are sending our youth a message that their academic success is unimportant to us. This tragically short-changes our students.

That's why I have introduced H.R. 415, the Expand and Rebuild America's Schools Act.

H.R. 415 will help local education agencies (LEAs) with limited financial resources by creating a new class of tax-exempt bonds, interest-free for LEAs. A financial institution that issues these bonds would receive a tax credit in the amount of the interest that would otherwise be paid by the LEA. So the school district only has to repay the principal, no interest. The Secretary of Education will be responsible for direct distribution of the bond program to the LEAs, avoiding any state bureaucracy involvement in funding decisions or program administration.

To be eligible to participate in the school construction bond program, LEAs must: (1) have at least 35 percent of students eligible for the free or reduced-cost lunch program; (2) be involved in a public/private partnership with a local private enterprise, to provide an amount equal to at least 10 percent of the interest-free capital provided; (3) maintain high educational standards; (4) have a projected growth rate at or above 10 percent over the next five years; (5) have a student-teacher ratio of 30 to 1 or higher; and (6) have already made an attempt to alleviate overcrowding.

These qualifying factors will ensure the bond program assists the most impacted, high-quality schools. Simultaneously, it will encourage schools to seek out private contributions to improve curriculum and equipment, enhancing the impact of the bond initiative. H.R. 415 will provide our children with an environment that is more conducive to learning, and prevent this facilities crisis from continuing into the next century.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

SMALL BUSINESS INNOVATION RE-
SEARCH PROGRAM REAUTHOR-
IZATION ACT OF 1999

SPEECH OF

HON. MICHAEL E. CAPUANO

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 27, 1999

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2396, the Small Business Innovation Research Program Reauthorization Act of 1999. This important program has had a significant impact not just in Massachusetts, but many other states around the country.

Literally thousands of companies have benefited from the SBIR program since its establishment in 1982. With the exception of some Internet and biotechnology companies, small technology businesses generally do not have the financial resources necessary to develop their most innovative ideas. Many businesses, in their early years and without much of a track record, have a difficult time finding the capital necessary to bring ideas to the marketplace, regardless of how good these ideas might be. The SBIR program provides these businesses with an opportunity to develop and implement their ideas with the goal of enabling these businesses to fully realize their commercial potential. When these companies succeed, they in turn strengthen the economy by providing the type of high quality jobs our country needs to prosper.

While the SBIR program has been a tremendous help to the small business technology community, more can be done to improve upon the success of the program. Through H.R. 2396, we are promoting a number of program changes that will increase the chances of success for small businesses operating in the technological fields.

In order for SBIR recipients to achieve success, it is important that participating agencies allocate a sufficient portion of its administrative expense budgets to the SBIR program. By reserving these funds, agencies could (1) conduct site visits to companies which have won Phase I or Phase II awards; (2) provide the opportunity for agencies to review a company's work; and (3) provide those firms with such assistance in meeting the requirements of the program as they may require. Such expenses require agency investment in SBIR beyond set aside funds. However, this investment is a necessary agency administrative expenditure if agencies and participating companies are to get maximum value out of the program. A great example of this type of investment already exists at the Department of Defense.

Another change this legislation will make to the SBIR program is the addition of a National Research Council study. The Science Committee asked the NRC to examine a variety of questions which I and other Committee members feel will lead to a better understanding of the program's potential and encourage other beneficial program changes in the future. It is important that this study is done objectively, with a true understanding of the problems facing SBIR winners. We expect that the NRC panel that oversees this project will embody a wide range of expertise and experience, and

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include a respectable number of small high technology businessmen who have participated in the program.

In closing I would like to reiterate the importance of this program and the need to pass this bill this session. In the Boston area, we have a number of great research universities and laboratories; each filled with bright, technically oriented people who are willing to take a chance on an idea that possesses great potential. It is in our best interest to do what we can to encourage these individuals to pursue their ideas to the fullest. With this in mind, I urge each of my colleagues to give this bill their strongest support.

MR. EDWARD BRENDER HONORS
SYNAGOGUE IN POEM

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 1, 1999

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize one of my constituents. Edward Brender of Kauneonga Lake, New York, wrote a poem honoring his Temple Beth-El which celebrated its 75th anniversary last year. The congregation first started meeting in a barn. When their numbers grew, additions were built. The congregation is still growing today.

Mr. Speaker, I submit Mr. Brender's poem into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD at this point:

"THE BARN THAT BECAME A HOUSE OF
WORSHIP"

(By Edward Brender)

The temple once a farmer's barn; part of
America's rural farm Furnished with a
century-old church's pews, yet filled
with devout and dedicated Jews.

At Temple Beth-El, we like to stay with
American uplifted heart's we pray.

For 75 years, the temple filled our spiritual
needs, while rabbis planted righteous
seeds.

The halls resounded with Chief Justice Law-
rence H. Cook's praise, reminding us of
Hebrew sacrifices during America's
revolutionary phase.

During the time of our country's greatest
need, recounting tales of Jewish patri-
ots' deeds.

High on a majestic verdant hill stands state-
ly Temple Beth-El; For 75 years a beacon
of freedom's faith, spreading
boundless love and tales to tell.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BOB RILEY

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 1, 1999

Mr. RILEY. Mr. Speaker, on Monday September 27 and Tuesday September 28 of 1999, I was unavoidably detained by a family medical emergency and missed the following votes. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on rollcall votes No. 448 regarding the EU ban of U.S. Hushkitted and Reengined Aircraft, "aye" on No. 449 supporting free elections in Haiti, "aye" on No. 450, conveying land to San Juan College, "aye" on No. 451